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HANDLING POTATOES

FROM GROWER TO RETAILER



IMPORTANT

Do you know that a potato is a living thing until it is consumed and should be handled carefully at all times?

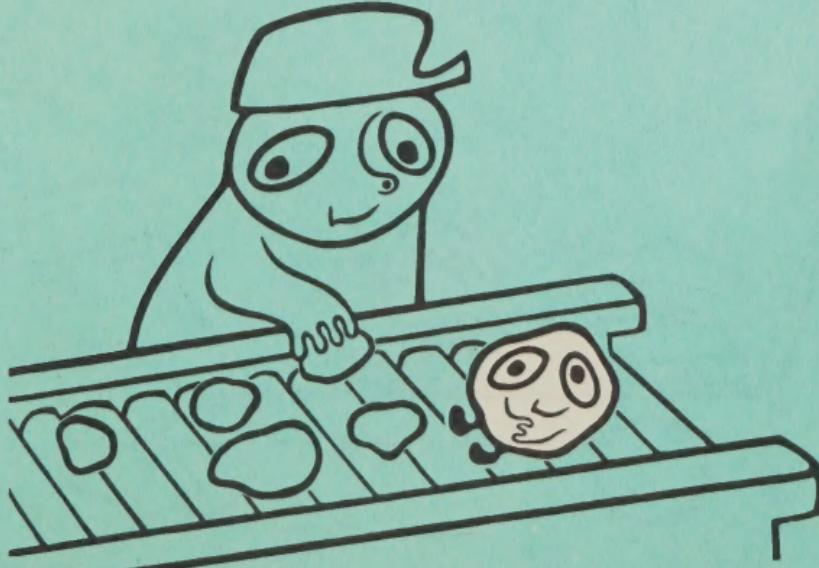
Careless handling at any stage today means dissatisfied customers and lost dollars tomorrow.

Observe the simple rules in this folder and give "Mr. Spud" a chance to grow old gracefully.

and GRADING SHIPPING

A little care here may save you dollars at destination. Don't be penny-wise and pound-foolish.

- If you use forks to load the conveyor, weld a small steel ball on the point of each tine.
- Pad all areas well and dump potatoes carefully onto the conveyor, rather than drop them.
- Check grading equipment regularly for points that may cause bruising.
- Have good lighting over your grading table.
- Raise the bottom of each jute bag until it's a third full, to prevent bruising.
- Check scales often, and see they are sitting level.
- Use master containers for consumer packs.
- Whenever possible, pad the floors of cars or trucks, particularly if made of metal.
- Check trucks and cars for faulty equipment before loading.
- In cold weather, preheat trucks and cars thoroughly.
- Take pride in your pack.
- Examine your storage stock regularly.
- Don't handle potatoes that are chilled.
- Don't overload the grader.
- Don't run the grader too fast.
- Don't bounce bags up and down in preparation for tying; jiggle sideways if necessary.
- Don't drop or throw bags into the car or truck.
- Don't use secondhand bags.



WHOLESALING

Remember, you are a most important link in the chain of marketing potatoes. Make sure your customers receive potatoes that are as good as you received.

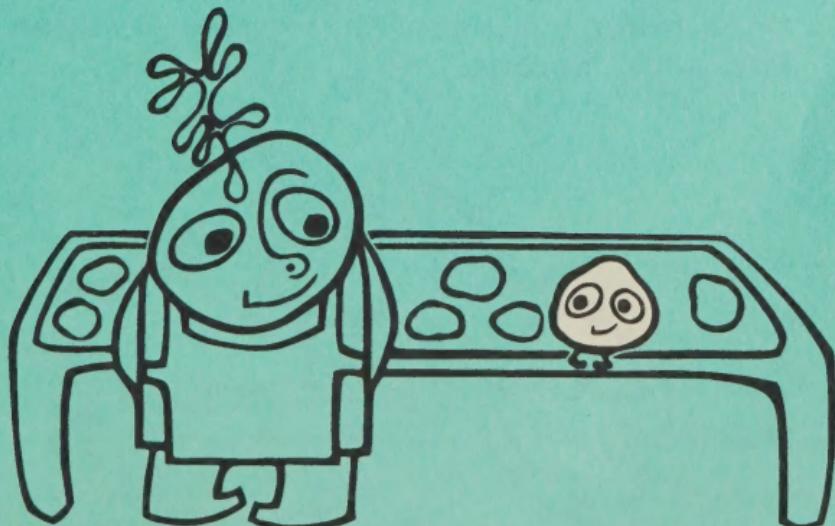
- *Insist that your employees handle potatoes carefully at all times.*
- Store potatoes on racks or skids.
- Store potatoes in a well-ventilated, cool, *dark* area of the warehouse.
- Repair or repack broken or torn containers.
- Repack containers showing wet spots.
- Rotate stock.
- Check weights, particularly on stocks you have held longer than usual.
- Know your grades. Have proper equipment if you regularly repack from bulk to consumer containers.
- Use master containers for consumer packs.
- Always provide adequate protection against temperature extremes during delivery.
- Don't let inexperienced staff handle potatoes.
- Don't let employees throw potatoes around.
- Don't use a bag of potatoes as a pad to drop other bags onto during unloading.
- Don't pile too high as potatoes at bottom will be seriously damaged.
- Don't pile crates or boxes on bags of potatoes in delivery trucks.
- Don't overload either yourself or your customers.



RETAILING

It is now up to you, Mr. Retailer. The time, money and care that has gone into growing, storing, grading, shipping and handling of potatoes can be wasted if you are careless. Potatoes are grown to be eaten; you have to sell to the consumer.

- Check your potato supplies on arrival.
- Know your supplier.
- Store potatoes in a well-ventilated place at around 45°F.
- Rotate your stock.
- Know your grades if you repack from large containers into consumer packs.
- Check bulk bins regularly to maintain grades.
- Display only a half-days sales in transparent bags; cover the rest with paper to avoid greening.
- Regrade any bags that are dropped.
- Don't let your employees handle potatoes roughly or carelessly.
- Don't bury old stock with new, either in the storage area or on the sales floor.
- Don't leave potatoes in transparent bags exposed to light when the store is closed, particularly fluorescent lights.
- Don't display potatoes in your windows.
- Don't take the grade for granted if you repack into consumer containers.
- Don't over-buy.



HARVESTING

Damage to potatoes at this stage can never be rectified; instead, it becomes worse. Carelessness reduces your grade-out and costs you money.

- Operate digger and conveyor chain at the slowest speed consistent with efficient operation.
- Adjust machine for depth, speed and agitation so a cushion of soil is carried to the rear of the digger bed.
- Replace agitators with idler wheels whenever possible.
- Pad all points in harvesting equipment where injury may occur.
- Complete harvesting before soil temperature drops below 40°F.
- Tilt barrel for first two baskets if potatoes are harvested in barrels.
- Don't vine-kill too rapidly. Two applications 5 to 7 days apart may be necessary.
- Don't harvest until the crop is thoroughly mature (10-14 days after the vines are dead).
- Don't harvest if there's a trace of green foliage or even green stalks. In some seasons, this causes heavy losses in storage from late blight rot.
- Don't dig potatoes in early morning after a very cold night or during very hot periods.
- Don't dig during wet weather unless absolutely necessary.
- Don't drop tubers from a height of over 8 inches.



STORING

Good storage provides a proper combination of cool temperatures, high humidity and moderate air circulation. This slows ageing of the potato without too much effect on quality, reduces shrinking and retards growth of storage disorders.

- Use loading chutes to drop potatoes into bins.
- Keep the storage at 50-60°F. and a relative humidity of 90 percent or over, during the first 10-14 days after harvest.
- Maintain thereafter a temperature of 45-50°F. and a relative humidity of 80-85 percent. If potatoes are to be stored longer than 2½-3 months, store them at 40°F.
- Keep air circulating enough to maintain a uniform temperature throughout the storage.
- Regard automatic controls as an aid to, but not a substitute for, good storage management.
- Remember that potatoes for processing require special storage treatment.
- Don't get too much soil into storage with the potatoes, particularly during wet weather or with potatoes grown in heavier soils.
- Don't let tubers stay wet after initial sweating and curing. Free moisture helps rot develop and may cause heating in the bins.
- Don't overload storage bins, make 20 feet the maximum height.
- Don't be discouraged if you do not have a modern storage. Try to understand the principles of good storage, and do the best with what you have. Good operation and poor storage is better than poor operation and good storage.



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